



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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COUNTY LIBRARY WINS 4 NACO AWARDS FOR INNOVATION *Creative Initiatives Garner National Kudos*

The National Association of Counties has recognized San Diego County Library with four 2005 NACO Achievement Awards in the annual competition for creative, imaginative programs of county governments across the nation. The four programs are:

Summer Reading Program Introduced to Polinsky Children's Center

San Diego County Library hosts a Summer Reading Program every year at its 32 branch libraries, as well as on board the 2 mobile libraries that make community stops. The Program encourages regular reading habits, helps prepare children and teens for the upcoming school year, and provides hundreds of opportunities around the county to participate in educational and entertaining special events. Children maintain reading logs of the number of books or hours that they read and are awarded incentives and prizes for attaining certain goals throughout the summer.

In an effort to reach youth in the County's Juvenile Court and Community Schools, San Diego County Library brought the 2004 Summer Reading Program to The A.B. and Jesse Polinsky Children's Center via the County Library's Mobile Library. Young people resident at the 24-hour temporary emergency shelter previously had no opportunity to participate in a library summer reading program.

The mobile library stopped at the Center on six Mondays from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Over 100 students participated in the program, which included a popular cartooning workshop and a gala party. Over 700 books were checked out. Bringing the Summer Reading program to the Center has prompted interest in continuing the benefits of public library service at the Center, including



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increased self-confidence and interest in reading among this at-risk youth population that generally has had a lower literacy rate than that of young people growing up in stable family environments.

Noches de la Familia - Solana Beach Branch Library : “Noches de Familia” is an innovative program to increase use, familiarity, and comfort in the Hispanic community with the Solana Beach Branch Library. Events were planned to build greater awareness of the library’s resources, as well as a sense of ownership and belonging to the community of library users. The Hispanic community represents 17% of the population in the library’s service area. Library staff and volunteers, along with local professionals, ran evening programs over a six-week period on citizenship, immigration, health, parenting, computers, and art. Raffles, door prizes, treats, entertainment, and supervised children’s activities were an added draw. The program concluded with family picture taking, a magic show, and a fiesta. To reach the target audience, volunteer “Library Ambassadors” reached out with visits to the Hispanic community. Fifty families, including 194 adults and 234 children, participated in the original program. Additional programs have attracted another 500 people who had not been active library customers.

Training Staff by Phone in New Online Information Sources: The San Diego County Library system has 32 branch locations and two mobile libraries serving 3,777 of San Diego County’s 4,200 square miles. To avoid the salary and gas costs of staff traveling long distances to the Library’s Kearny Mesa operations center for training in the online information products to which the Library subscribes, the Library launched a pilot program of conference call training. The 1.5 hour classes have been successful. Staff members receive handouts ahead of time and work at their branch’s computer stations during the training. Added savings come from not having to hire library substitutes to fill in for the span of hours staff would otherwise be traveling to and from training sessions. Limiting class size to five has provided a high level of individualized instruction.



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"Read To Your Breed" - Valley Center Branch Library: Since 2003, school age young readers in Valley Center have had the opportunity to practice their skills by reading to trained and patient "therapy" dogs, who visit the library one evening a week, along with their trainers. The children sign up for 15-minute sessions, during which they can sit or lie down on a comfortable pillow and read aloud to the canine companions. The program provides wonderful encouragement for reluctant readers who need to build confidence in their reading skills.

For more information, contact the San Diego County Library at (858) 694-2415.

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